



It's Official *Norfolk Southern Donates Rail Corridor*

As 2006 came to an end the 34.8 miles of railroad property between Burkeville and Pamplin became the property of the Commonwealth of Virginia. In late December deed work was completed and Norfolk Southern donated the abandoned rail line to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for development as a Virginia State Park. Immediately, state park staff secured the corridor and put up signs notifying the public the corridor was closed for development. Norfolk Southern and DCR officials are working on a ceremonial deed presentation to be held somewhere on the new High Bridge Trail State Park in early summer.

Park Master Plan Approved

High Bridge Trail State Park now has an approved plan to oversee its transformation from a railroad to a popular destination. The High Bridge Trail State Park Master Plan Advisory Committee completed their work and presented the draft master plan to the public at a meeting held in October 2006. It was then presented to the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation during their December 2006 meeting. With the board's approval the draft was sent to members of the Virginia General Assembly for review. In early February 2007, DCR Director Joseph H. Maroon signed the form that officially adopted the master plan.

The master plan is an important document in the life of High Bridge Trail State Park. It guides its phased development over the next 20 years or so. More importantly, the master plan must be developed and approved before park development funds can be secured.

The first phase of the master plan focuses on the park's namesake, High Bridge, and providing access to it from the east. It calls for securing and decking the bridge, surfacing the trail between the bridge and Aspen Hill Road, developing an Aspen Hill Road parking area and a controlled access road from the new parking area to the bridge. Interpretive signs and kiosks for the parking lot and bridge are also included. Management improvements in phase one are an administrative office, maintenance area and ranger residence.

The next phase will connect Farmville with Rice, with later phases connecting Farmville with Prospect, Prospect with Pamplin, and Rice with Burkeville in that order. The rate at which these phases are developed depends on funding.

General Assembly Appropriates Construction Funds

With the new master plan approved during the session, the 2007 Virginia General Assembly appropriated \$1 million to start developing High

Bridge Trail State Park. DCR has already received grants totaling nearly \$500,000. These funds will be used to construct as much of the trail as possible. DCR will seek additional grant funds and appropriations to complete construction of the park. Decking High Bridge will be the first priority.

Who to Contact at DCR

If you have questions about the park or would like to talk to a state park representative, please contact DCR's state parks office in Richmond at (804) 692-0403. If you have a law enforcement issue, please call your local sheriff's office.

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Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation



